



USDA Agencies Striking to Make a Difference

Rural Development, Farm Service Agency, and Natural Resources and Conservation, USDA agencies in Louisiana, travels across the state to let rural disadvantaged communities know about the StrikeForce for Rural Growth and Opportunity Initiative. This initiative is part of a commitment to grow economies, increase investments, and create opportunities in poverty-stricken rural communities.

Coastal Communities Consulting, (CCC) a non-profit organization, in Gretna, Louisiana, works primarily with commercial fisherman and their families in targeted rural areas. They contacted Rural Development for help to assist the commercial fishermen with economic development opportunities. As a result, CCC was awarded a \$200,000 Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant.



USDA Deputy Secretary Krysta Harden visited Coastal Communities Consulting in Gretna, Louisiana, and was afforded the opportunity to meet local fishermen and their families and hear about the struggles they face.

The funding from this grant will help CCC work in the rural areas of Jefferson, Orleans, Plaquemines, and St. Bernard Parishes. Technical assistance will be available to help the local commercial fishermen and their families with everyday struggles they face as disadvantaged rural entrepreneurs. Their businesses and harvested sea-food products are vital to Louisiana's economy and tourism industry.

A major barrier for these families and businesses is that some are non-English speakers and in need of help with government processes, grant application, and other resources vital to the success of their business. CCC provides support and assistance by employing bilingual personnel who can speak English and Vietnamese and provide technical skills needed to operate their business and create ladders of opportunities.

Louisiana was designated as a StrikeForce state last year. Through StrikeForce, USDA will continue to leverage resources and collaborate with partners and stakeholders to improve economic opportunity and quality of life in communities that need our services the most. Over 40 of the 64 parishes are considered persistent poverty parishes with several ranking the poorest throughout the nation. The poverty rate in Louisiana is around 20 percent and the third highest in the nation. The high rate of poverty contributes to lack of jobs, poor health and education, and declining towns and cities.

Obligation Amount:	\$200,000 Small Socially Disadvantaged Producer Grant (SSDPG)
Date of Obligation:	September 2014
Congressional District:	Representative Scalise, District 1; Senators Landrieu and Vitter
Partners:	USDA StrikeForce Team (NRCS, FSA, & RD)
Demographics:	Vietnamese, Cambodian, and disadvantaged rural entrepreneurs
Impact:	Technical training and planning to develop skills to sustain, grow, and stimulate the local economy.
